

NOTE

New England Aster, *Aster novae-angliae*: A New Host Record for  
*Microrhopala xerene* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)

The leafmining hispine, *Microrhopala xerene* (Newman), has been reported to feed upon ten host plants in three genera of Asteraceae including: *Aster chilensis* Nees, *A. cordifolius* L., *A. patens* Ait., *A. paternus* Cronq., *A. puniceus* L., *A. simplex* Willd., *Boltonia asteroides* (L.) L'Her., *Solidago caesia* L., *S. canadensis* L., and *S. juncea* Ait. (Needham et al. 1928. Leaf-mining insects. The Williams and Wilkens Co., Baltimore, MD. pg. 295.; Clark. 1983. Great Basin Nat. 43: 605-606; Ford and Cavey. 1985. Coleopt. Bull. 39: 53; Williams. 1989. Ibid. 43: 391-392). Although previously listed as a host of *M. xerene* (Needham et al. op. cit.; Williams op. cit.), *Sericocarpus asteroides* (L.) B.S.P. is now recognized to be synonymous with *A. paternus* (Soil Conservation Service. 1982. National List of Scientific Plant Names. Volume 2. Synonymy. pg. 381.). In this note I report a new host record for *M. xerene* from southwestern Virginia.

During early July 1989, I collected larval *M. xerene* from mines in leaves of New England aster, *Aster novae-angliae* L., growing at the edge of a wet meadow in Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia. Larvae

mining leaves of *A. novae-angliae* formed the conspicuous inflated cavities typical of the genus (Clark op. cit.). Adult *M. xerene* were also observed feeding on leaves of *A. novae-angliae* both in 1989 and in the spring of 1990. I have previously described host plant use by *M. xerene* at the Blacksburg site, where *A. puniceus* and *A. simplex* are the primary and secondary host plants for this species (Williams. op. cit.). *Aster novae-angliae* appears to be a tertiary host for *M. xerene* at this site given that it is considerably less abundant than either *A. puniceus* or *A. simplex*. Host plant and insect voucher specimens are deposited in the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Herbarium and the Miami University Insect Collection, respectively.

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